

## GONDOLAS AND GONDOLIERS

Boats Built in Venice for the World's Fair.

### THE IMPORTED GONDOLIERS.

What They Are Paid and How They Will Live.

Reminders of the Lovely Moonlight Venetian Nights, the Splashes of Oars and the Delightful Traditions of Music and Song.

Correspondence of THE HERALD.]

VENICE, April 28.—To complete the illusion of the lagoon which is to be reproduced at the Chicago exhibition of 1893, some of the gondolas which take the place of carriages and render the principal town of the Adriatic so poetic and characteristic, will be sent to America.

The gondolas that are being sent to Chicago are not to be painted black like the ones now in use in Venice, but colored, having the false (cabin) to match, so that there will be pink, blue and green gondolas with cabins or ornamental stuffs of the same tint.

The gondolas are twenty in number; fifteen have covered cabins, the others are open. Besides the twenty gondolas, four



THE BROTHERS ZANELLO.

bisone will be sent. These are special boats also peculiar to Venice, and there is only one design, so that it is difficult for the builders to make a mistake in the proportions. Tradition guides the workmen, but where the Chicago gondolas differ is that instead of holding three persons, they will be able to hold ten, with the two rowers, so they will be less swift. The bisone also will hold twenty persons, but will have only two rowers.

At Chicago, as at Venice, we shall hear the traditional cry of the gondoliers, "Stai!" and "Preni!" when two gondolas meet, a cry which might be translated by "stop!" and "make haste!" These words take the place of the crack of the oarsman's whip, the horn of the tramway and the whistle of the railway.

The cost of these gondolas will be about 500 francs each for the uncovered ones and 800 francs for those covered by the false. The price of the bisone is calculated at 1,700 francs including packing. The contractor of the gondolas is Mr. Domenico Moretti, a Venetian, who has resided thirty-two years in America and it is he who has undertaken this task for the exhibition.

It would certainly have been better if Moretti had engaged only professional gondoliers. Luigi Zanello is the most famous winner of regattas, and it is with him that the Venetian custom mentioned further on has originated. He was the first to arrive five times at the winning post and is the glorious possessor of five banners.

The exportation of the pretty swift gondolas to Chicago is a charming idea and no less delightful will it be to find a portion of Venice at the World's fair. On the 6th of April fifty-six gondoliers left Venice for Chicago. They do not receive any payment until the day of the inauguration. During the voyage they partake of the same food as the sailors on the steamer, but are not paid. When they arrive in Chicago they will be lodged in a wooden house and from the day that they enter into service they will have 200 francs a month and their keep, which will consist of breakfast, luncheon and dinner.

The working hours of the gondoliers at Chicago will be from 9 a. m. till 11 p. m., and they will all have to provide themselves with four white suits. In Venice of course they work as long as they like. Attilio Farfati, a studious writer on Venetian customs says "Gondolas and boatmen are a mixture of the regal and fantastic. Be as little poetical as you like, but the lovely moonlight Venetian nights, the splash of the oars in the silent lagoon, must take you into a world not your own; be an enemy to all that is romantic, but the sky, the water and the delicate shift floating along with the marvellous figure of the boatman standing upon the unsteady poop must speak to you in a language not generally used."

The gondola has inspired poets who write of love; songs about written in that sweet Venetian dialect, which is so charming in the mouth of a woman. (Y. Malaman). In a volume entitled "Il Taccuino in Venezia," (the eighteenth century in Venice) has published an entire collection of these poems. They all

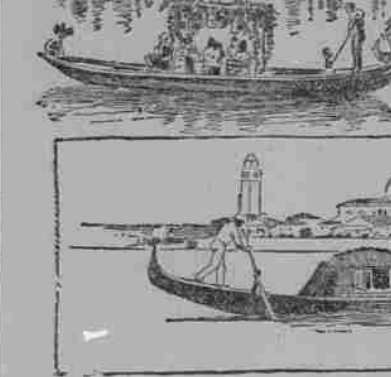
exhale a freshness and sweetness that cannot be translated. Nowadays every thread of tradition is rapidly being lost, the Venetian marriage has not been consulted since 1890 and the modern boatmen differ greatly from the ancient, if we except those of the patrician houses, who are privileged people. At present, as found, the gondoliers are good sort of people, capable of yelling like creatures possessed by the devil, but incapable of doing harm to any one.

The wit of these boatmen is peculiarly pungent and often cuts like a razor. A foreigner who arrived in Venice wished to go to a friend's abode, but had forgotten his address. He got into a gondola and ordered the man to take him to St. Moses; when he got there it did not seem to him right, so after searching in vain he went to St. Paul, with the same result, then off he went to another of the various quarters of Venice, all named after some saint. After some hours, the boatman looking at him quizzically, said, *la regata comi paron, la lassa far ami.* (Come with

on his favorite poem. Antonio Maschio is no longer a boatman, but follows his studies as custodian in the Toscarini lyceum.)

Another Venetian custom, now dying out or rather which is not celebrated with the pomp and solemnity of bygone years, are the regattas. These regattas, copied from the ancient Roman and Greek boat races, were held by the fraternities of the boatmen and soon impassioned the people. In 1900 is mentioned the first official regatta in Venice. Then the regatta was roused with galleys and later on this custom served as a spur for the training of the crews.

The gondolas in the regattas are served by two boatmen, one at the poop and one at the prow; each boat has its own colors. They start from the public gardens and advance swiftly, close together in a straight line, as far as the stake round which they must go; then they return the same way with the greatest velocity. The prizes are four in number and consist of banners, which are kept by the families of the winners and of sums of money



VARIOUS VENETIAN GONDOLAS.

me, sir, I will manage for you.) He took him to "All Saints," where, arrived he said, laying down his oar, *qua la lapa tutti la cor ca che.* (Here they all are, and you can find what you want.)

The boatman who can stammer a few words of French and tries thus to attract foreigners is another type; if the supposed foreigner answers in pure Venetian dialect that he does not want a gondola, he abuses him and uses bad language. Curiously enough, Goldoni, the great Venetian dramatist, writes little about gondoliers in his plays; Alessandro Lanchi has a comedy "La Regata Veneziana."

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which they spend gaily. The last one to arrive has the characteristic and traditional live pig as a reproach for having delayed in the race. When the regatta is finished the line of boats is broken and the Grand canal seems literally swarming and echoes with lively song.

Whether of the past or the present gondoliers are always characteristic people and different from all other boatmen. If they are not as splendid as they were, the fault is not theirs but of the times, which have become hard in the old realm of the Adriatic.

HELEN ZIMMERMAN.

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Altering the Case.  
"Spatis, I forgot to register last week."  
"Weren't you registered already?"  
"No, moved into another precinct a few months ago."  
"That's too bad, Hunker. You've lost your vote."  
"Yes, it's too late, of course?"  
"No way of fixing it at all?"  
"No. The law's clear on that point."  
"It's too bad. I was going to vote for your man this time."  
"Say, Hunker, you leave the matter with me. I'll fix you all right!"—Chicago Tribune.

The Standard Method.  
"See the Fair city and die," said Mr. Laker of Chicago, proudly.  
"At the hands of the sandbaggers, I suppose?" replied Bleeker.—Truth.

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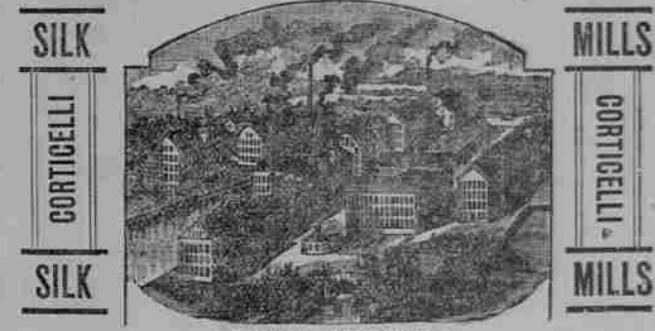
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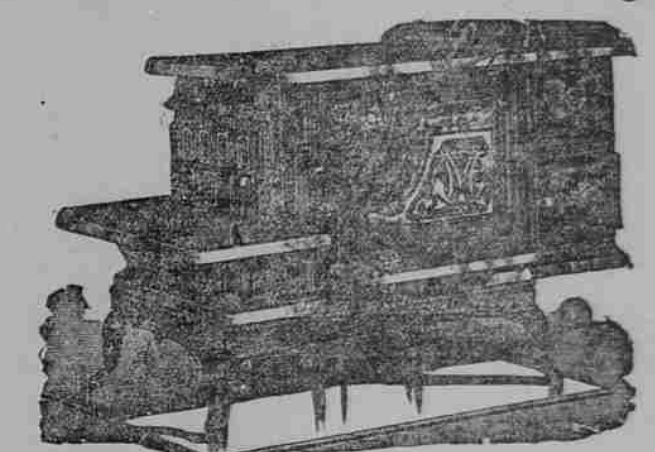


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